

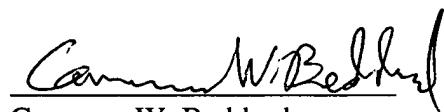
SUPPLEMENTAL RESPONSE UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.111
U. S. Application No. 09/476,372

priority, Applicant establishes an effective filing date of December 31, 1998, which is prior to the U.S. filing date of Akerberg of February 19, 1999. Thus, by filing the certified English translation, Applicant hereby removes Akerberg as a reference. Accordingly, claims 2, 3, and 5 are allowable over the prior art for this reason, in addition to the reasons presented in the Response filed March 5, 2003.

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



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PATENT TRADEMARK OFFICE

Date: April 3, 2003